/4 cont./

101 194 lakes"; Tbeli and tobeli (1) mean "little lake, lake-, located

1. "Tbeli" (pronounced "tobeli" in Mingrel) has been the title of the bishops of Tbetha since 918 A.D.

or living near a lake." And I can find no difference whatsoever between the Grusian Tobeli and the biblical Thobeli, which on Kipert's map occupy exactly the spot where the Grusian province of Tobetha (Tobeli) is located.

Greco-Roman authors sometimes refer to these Thobeli as Tibareni, and this name is also the Grusian Tobeli, or, in the Svan pronunciation, "Tibar." In the plural of this word we have "Tibareni," i.e., Tibarians = lake-dwellers. Hecataeus (ca. 550 B.C.) calls them Tipanisi (Tipanisse), which is a genitive plural and in Grusian means "those of the lakes." The Greco-Roman authors consider the Tipanisi, Tibareny, to be a people related to the Moskhi and the Kolkhi. From this same root we now have a multitude of /5/ names such as Tobarovani (rich in lakes), Lake Taparavan; Tobanieri (lake-), village in Imeretia (near Kutais); Toba-qure (lake-bay), village in Mingrelia; Didi-tba, great lake, near Tsarskie Kolodtsy; Tubanis-tba, lakish-lake, in the Akhalkalaki uyezd; Tqe-toba (forest-lake) in the Zakataly okrug, and others.

Reserving the right to return on some other occasion to a more detailed exposition of my views on the origin of the ethnic names of the Kartvelian people, I shall continue now with a brief historical sketch of Abkhazia.

• 195 The Grusian chronicles, the authenticity and ancientness of which were refuted by the late K.P.Patkanov, but which are fully substantiated anew by the discovered Grusian chronicle of the first half of the tenth century, testify that the propagator of Christianity in Abkhazia was Simon the Canaanite, who was in Georgia together with the apostle Andrew. Both apostles entered Adzharia, from where Andrew set out for Meskhetia (to Akhaltsikh),

/5 cont./

• 175 and Simon the Canaanite for Imeretia and Abkhazia. Although the latter fell victim here to heathens, the seeds of Christianity scattered by him did not die without a trace; they sprouted in the course of two to three centuries, and the heathen world shone forth with the light of Christian teaching. On the place where [178] Simon the Canaanite was killed, a temple was erected which attracts a multitude of pilgrims even now.

We also have information from the Greco-Roman authors concerning Christianity in Abkhazia and Georgia. For instance, Procopius, an author of the end of the sixth century, says: "Christianity has nowhere been preserved in such a pure form as in Iveria /Iberia/." Further: "Since the reign of Justinian Augustus, the customs of the Abkhaz have been noticeably mollified because of their adoption of Christianity. Justinian sent to them one of his eunuchs, Everrat, an Abkhaz by birth, with the object of stopping the princes from producing castrates. Justinian also built in the country of the Abkhaz a temple to the Mother of God and appointed priests and saw to it that the latter spread Christianity" (1).

1. Brosset, Histoire de la Géorgie, St. Petersburg, 1856, 4to, II, p. 240.

The temple of the Mother of God mentioned by Procopius is the famous temple of Bichvinta (Pitsunda), which from the earliest times has played a prominent role, not only in the religious life, but also in the political life of the Abkhaz. The Abkhazian eristav /governor of a province/ /6/ Leon II, taking advantage of Georgia's weakness after two Arab military invasions, made himself independent of the king of Georgia, Dzhuansher, and assumed the title of King of Abkhazia in 786. As the capital of his kingdom he selected Bichvinta, where the Catholicoi were already installed. The independence of the Abkhaz kingdom lasted two centuries in all. David the Great, King of Georgia, being childless, adopted Bagrat III (980-1014), born of the marriage of Gurgen, the heir to the Georgian throne, and Gurandukhta, the daughter of George II, King of Abkhazia.

/6 cont./

175 And since the male line of the Abkhaz kings was cut off with the death of the blind king Theodosius II, the Abkhaz kingdom, by right of the closest relation to that house, together with the appanages of the Bagratids of Samtskhe, was united with the Grusian kingdom, and Bagrat III assumed the title of the Grusian and the Abkhaz King. Since that time the Catholicoi of Mtskheta have assumed the title of the Catholicoi "of all Georgia" and sometimes "of all Georgia and Abkhazia." In the florescent period of Grusian history (tenth to twelfth centuries) all Abkhazia and especially its coastal parts were covered with towns, monasteries, churches, and fortified castles. From the end of the 177 fifteenth century on, i.e. upon the fall of Byzantium and the 175 replacement of the cross in the Hagia Sophia by the crescent, Mohammedanism gradually began to spread in Abkhazia; this trend was further favored by the circumstance that in that same century Georgia, weakened and ruined in the century-old struggle with the Mongols and later with the Persians and Turks, broke up in the fifteenth century into three kingdoms (Kakhetia, Kartlia, and Imeretia) and five principalities (Samtskhe, Svanetia, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, and Guria); moreover, the Turks subjugated Adzharia and began to spread Mohammedanism there. At this time also the Caucasian mountaineers (Lezgi /Lezgin/, Chechen, North Osset, Circassians, and others) renounced Christianity and accepted Mohammedanism. Georgia, surrounded on all sides by Mohammedanism, managed with difficulty to preserve her religion, but weak and small Abkhazia was unable to do so; Mohammedan doctrine spread widely there and would have completely swallowed up Christianity if the Georgians had not in good time called the Colossus of the North to the defense of all the ancient aborigines of the Caucasus.

127 In the compilation of the present ethnographical sketch of Abkhazia, the author has used as source-material and texts the following articles by Abkhazians: 1. "Abkhaziya i Abkhaztsy /Abkhazia and the Abkhaz/," an ethnographical sketch by P. Giorgidze, published in Iveriia, 1888; 2. "Abkhaziya," /7/ an ethnographical sketch by K. Madchavariani, in the newspaper

/52 cont./

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766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

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[821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

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1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gaidukevich, p. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 764 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326 796 Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[782] 796 [914] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782 326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, A 101 Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'šili and Ap'sari in A 648 Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia dur- 175 ing the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are C 101 supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point be- 648 yond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present R name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in 167 the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

A 142 [751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over